A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

A very godly and profitable Sermon, Preached at Lee in Essex.

BY

ARTHVR DENT, Minister of Gods Word.

Published at the request of sundry godly, and well disposed persons.

IONAH 2.8.

They that waite upon lying vanities, forsake their owne mercies.

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In Concionem *Arthuri Dent*, *G. Pudei* Carmen.

Maturè resipisce precor, peccataq́ linque:
Qui legis, aut audis, quisquis es, istud opus.
Si nova peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio testis erit.
Hæc aliqui lecta flentes sua crimina multum,
Mutarunt mores, & nova vita placet.

The same in English

THou that dost read or heare this worke,
I wish thee to doe this:
Repent in time, and sinne forsake,
Amend what is amisse.
But if thou wilt adde sinne to sinne,
Not minding to mend,
This Sermon shall a witnesse be
Against thee in the end.
Some that haue heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their sinne,
Haue changd their former manners, and
A new life now begin.

To

To the Reader.

ALthough I was moſt vnwilling that this poore talent and trauell of mine, ſhould euer haue beene broached abroad, and come to light, both becauſe it may ſeeme as a candle lighted at noone-day; as alſo, becauſe many other mens doing might more worthily a great deale haue beene publiſhed & committed vnto letters; yet becauſe diuers wᵗʰ heard it preached with a liuely voice, were very inſtant, yea, and more then importunate with me to haue it publiſhed, vſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gain-ſay, I did at laſt yeeld to their requeſt: and ſo this vntimely fruit is come abroad to be ſold in open Markets. Let no man therefore be offended, that I haue not ſtrained my ſelfe to fly an high pitch, to foame out the froath of mans wiſdome, and to make

a great ſhew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanity, till it burſt with ſwelling; but this is not my vſe; I ſeeke eſpecially the ſaluation of the ſimple and ignorant: and therefore ſtoope downe to their reach and capacity. Therefore I beſeech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: Read this without preiudice; like it as thou profiteſt; ſo ſhalt thou haue praiſe of GOD, and comfort in thy Conſcience.

A SERMON of Repentance.

LVKE 13. 5.

I tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these words of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne Sacrifices, that is, murdered them as they were sacrificing, and so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. These men therefore thought that those Galileans were greater sinners then all other Galileans, because they had suffered such things: and that those eightéene also, vpon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them, were sinners aboue all the men that dwelt in Ierusalem. Wherein they did vtter a secret corruption naturally engendred in all men: that is very sharply to sée into the sinnes of others, severely to censure of them, but in the meane while to

flatter themselues, and to be blindfold in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought, because the like iudgements did not fall vpon them, therefore they were well enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God: according as many doe falsely suppose, that they are alwayes the worst sort of people whom God doth most strike and presse with his punishing hand: hauing forgotten that God doth not keepe an ordinary rate here below, to punish euery man as hee is worst, or to fauour and cocker him as he is best: but onely taketh some examples, as he thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisements of all others, and to be as it were looking glasses, wherin euery man may see his owne face, yea, and his owne cause handled, and that God is a seuere reuenger of sin: that all men may learne by the example of some, to tremble and beware, lest peraduenture they be worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these newes to our Sauiour Christ, had taken forth this lesson: Whereupon our Sauiour is iustly occasioned to correct their erroneous and sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishment of others, but rather be instructed thereby to repent.

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And further, to ſignifie that God doth not alwaies moſt puniſh the moſt notorious offenders, as Murtherers, Theeues, Robbers, Whoremongers, Blaſphemers, Quarrellers, Scoffers, and ſuch like: but referreth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and as it were ſatteth them againſt the day of ſlaughter, and therefore he anſwereth them negatiuely, ſaith No, or not ſo, but except yee repent, ye ſhall likewiſe all periſh: As if he ſhould ſay: Are ye all of this opinion indeed, that only monſtrous ſinners are puniſhed in this world, and others let alone? or that the Galileans, and thoſe xviii. vpon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were greater ſinners then all others? Or doe you thinke becauſe the ſame iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you ſhall ſteale away in the darke, and eſcape the iudgements of God? No, no, you are deceiued: For I ſay vnto you, that except you mourne and lament for your ſins, and fall to ſome agreement with God in time, you (I ſay, euen you, which are ſo ready to condemne others, and iuſtifie your ſelues) ſhall not only periſh with the like iudgements in this preſent world, but be euerlaſtingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Sauiour in ſo ſaying, doth thunder downe a moſt dreadfull ſentence vpon all our heads: for hee concludeth and ſetteth downe,

that

that all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they bee high or low, rich or poore, yong or old, noble or vn-noble, learned or vnlearned, simple or politicke, of what state, degree, and condition soeuer they be, liuing and dying without repentance, shall perish and bee damned in hel fire for euer. The scriptures are full of such thunderbolts. Ioh. 3. 18. He that beleeues not is damned already: And 2 Cor. 13. 5. Proue your selues whether you are in the faith examine your selues: know you not your selues that Iesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the housholdsitter of repentance, are no better then reprobates, Cast-awaies, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these daies are grossly deceiued in Repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hinderances: and also why, when, & wherefore we should repent: therefore I haue a present intent to teach, first what is repentance: secondly, which bee her qualities and effects: thirdly, when wee should repent: fourthly, wherefore we should repent: and last of all, what letteth vs from repentance. Which order

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and methode of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with mee it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing and continuall mourning of the heart and conscience for sin, ioyned with faith, & both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words & works from euill to good. This repentance no doubt, was in Dauid, who when hee was couertly reproued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sins laid before his eyes, did not stubbornly defend them, and so iustle against God: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them ouer, but cryeth out in the bitternesse of heart, I haue sinned, and thereupon made the 51 Psalme, a Psalme indeed full of dolour and heauinesse, wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults, lamenteth his sins, and prayeth euen for a new heart, and a new spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new purposes of amendment of life: so that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe (as the Booke of Psalmes doth euery where declare, which layeth him out as it were in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward & outward sins. Here therefore behold what is Repentance.

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Likewise S. Peter through infirmity hauing denyed his Lord and Master Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience and wakened with the alarme of a poore Cockes crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate, with an heauie heart weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutly professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is repentance. The prophets, in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifies, Turne ye, or, Returne yee and come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed farre out of his way, must returne quite backe againe the contrary way: So those that haue strayed from the way of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forward, and altogether change the course of their life: so that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God, with all your heart, soule and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the new Testament, exhorting vnto repentance, vse the Greeke word, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after-wit: so that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulfe of sinne, when they come vnto themselues, & haue recouered their wits,

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will be wise afterward, and take hèd they neuer come there againe, according to the Prouerbe: The burnt child will take heed of the fire. By this time, I hope you sée what is Repentance; it is not euery sorrow, but sorrow for sinne; not for some sinne, but for all sinne: not for an houre, but for euer: not for a day, but continually: not for a wéeke, but as long as we liue. Some thinke euery sorrow is repentance, but so should worldlings repent. Some thinke euery little pang for sinne is Repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all wéeping and lamenting for sin is repentance, so should Esau, Iudas and Cain repent. Some thinke euery little humbling of our selues is repentance, but so should Ahab repent. Some thinke that good workes, and good purposes are repentance, but so should euery sicke man repent. Some thinke that reformation of words and déeds are repentance, but so should ciuill men repent. Some thinke that to cry God mercy is repentance, and so should euery foole repent. You sée therefore how many are deceiued in repentance. But if you will sée what it is indéed, look back to that which hath béene said before: for he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang downe his head like a bulrush for a day onely, and so haue done: nor cry from the téeth outward,

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Lord haue mercy on me, and so away: but he must make a backe reckoning, with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Prophet Dauid, Psalm. 119. 59. I haue considered my wayes, and turned my feet vnto thy Testimonies. So must euery one that meaneth to repent, slincke aside into some corner or out-place, that there he may haue roome enough to beate his owne conscience, and to make his heart smart for his sinnes, by aggrauation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the ninth of Daniel: The Church of God confesseth her sinnes, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping vp one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I haue sinned: but to say, I haue most traiterously sinned, I haue most obstinately, carelesly, and rebelliously sinned: I haue monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such a company, on such a day in such a corner, in the darke, I committed Adultery closely, when I thought none had seen me, in such a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife, mine owne conscience doth accuse mee of it: in such and such company I haue been drunke, I haue spoken and railed against Gods Word, I haue mocked the Preachers, I haue spared no oathes nor filthy speech: and now (O Lord) Lord, what an vgly monster

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and wretched villaine am I? Heere I stand before thy presence, all naked, blind, wounded, poore, wretched & miserable, hauing deserued a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter into iudgement, and try the Law with mee. Therefore I beseech thee to shew pittie and compassion vpon mee. Annoynt my wounds with the oyle of mercy, restore me my sight, cloath my nakednesse, enrich mee that am poore, strengthen me that am weake, helpe me that am fallen: O bid me not farewell. The infant ouercommeth his mother with crying, the child his Father with weeping, and the seruant his master by intreaty, and wilt thou not be intreated O Lord? Thus, I say, if euery man would speak in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly, or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly hee were in the way to repentance.

But alas, it is a woe'd to see how the blinde buzzards, and crooked Canker-wormes of this world goe awry from this rule, deceiuing themselues with the bare title and naked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can talke of it, but few walke in it: many speake of it, but few feele it: many describe it, but few know it. It is hidde and locked vp from the World, and reuealed onely vnto Gods Children: many thinke they haue caught it,

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when they haue but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it: It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it: so wide, that few can comprehend it: so slippery, that few can hold it: so secret, that few can finde it: therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueale vnto vs this mystery which is hid from the world, that we may see it, and know it, finde it, and feele it to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus, which grace he grant vs.

But now to the second poynt, concerning the Qualities and Fruits of Repentance: one especiall quality of Repentance is alwayes to bring with it remission of sinnes: for where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after: Not that Repentance deserueth remission of sinns, but because where God worketh repentance, there hee pardoneth sinnes because of his promise, as in Ezekiel 18.27. When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that hee hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue. And againe, Esay 55.7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord, and hee will haue mercy vpon him. So here wee see to whom

whom forgiuenesse of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sin, and imbrace godlinesse, to those that forsake their owne wayes and imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke in their own waies & follow the delights of sin, without any forsaking or purpose to leaue them, they haue nothing to doe with the mercy of God: and though Iesus Christ had suffered a thousand deaths (which could not be) yet shal no impenitent sinner haue remission of his sins by his death, nor any other benefit of his passion: for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon earth. He therefore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of his mysticall body, can inioy nothing by Christs death: If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, & withereth, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, & they burne. *Ioh.* 15. 16. Wherevnto in the 29. of *Deut.* how God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercy, & doth most terribly shoot out against them, He that heareth the words of this curse, & blesseth himselfe in his heart, saying; I shall haue peace, although I walke according to the stubbornes of mine own heart, thus adding drunkennes to thirst: the Lord will not be mercifull vnto him, but then the wrath of

the Lord, and his iealousie shall smoake against that man, & euery curse that is written in this booke shall light vpon him. So that God saith plainly hee hath no mercy for such as walke in vaine delights of sin, & in the stubbornesse of their owne harts, adding drunkennes to thirst: that is, ioyning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blinde wormes of the world deceiue themselues. For they thinke, whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent or not repent, yet they shall bee saued by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sins, and so worke that villany against Christ. I hope to be saued by Christs death as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercy is common to all? and Christs death a bawd for thy sins? No, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt hop-short. For it will proue far otherwise. For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into iustice, and Christs death into worme-wood, because thou hatedst knowledge and chusedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see, my deare brethren, that repentance must needs goe before forgiuenesse of sin, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp: and this is the first quality

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of repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proposition of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the mind. For whosoever hath truely repented, you shall by and by see a most marvellous and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not doe as he hath done, nor speake as he hath spoken, nor company as he hath companied, nor play the good-fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to doe, nor run the same excesse of ryot as he was wont. And this is that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle and foame at the mouth like wild Bores, and to speake evill of them that turne vnto God: For the world loveth his owne, and cannot abide that God should pluck one feather from his wings; but repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Sathan, and change them from the condition of the world: for it maketh of proude, humble: of hurtfull, harmlesse: of cruell, meeke: of wolues, lambes: of lyons, sheepe: of adulterers, chaste liuers: of drunkards, sober men: of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, friends: of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, louers: of earthly, heauenly: of Duels, Saints: all these worketh repentance. Paul trauelled toward Damascus a Wolfe, a Persecuter, a Blood-sucker, a Ha-

ter, a despiter: but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and cleane of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. When Iesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost upon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Ierusalem, which mocked, and said, They are full of new wine: But the same men cryed out by and by after; Men and brethren, what shall we doe to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull and sodaine change: See then the force of repentance, when God striketh it into the heart of man, and driueth the naile to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisdome and policy of man is not able to bring to passe; & when they haue prouled hither and thither and laid their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger then all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe deuices cannot compasse: for the conuersion of a sinner is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to behold our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no: For if we finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vn-

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der damnation. Therefore let euery man looke vnto himselfe: for marke how much he is changed and altred from his former wicked waies, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man he was three, foure, eight, nay thirty yeeres agoe, surely, surely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I marueil then how these men, which neuer felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose conscience telleth them that they are not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can haue hope of saluation: vnlesse peraduenture they beleeue not this doctrine, or thinke it to be false. I will send ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they now are, and yet thought they might doe well enough for all that, although both blinde in iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne and doe know men, which before their conuersion and inward change, were counted as honest men as euer brake bread, and as substantiall men as any could be, and as true dealers, vpright liuers, good house-keepers, as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too: & yet notwithstanding when they haue felt repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirit, at the preaching of the Word: and when they haue had new hearts gi-

nen them to discerne better, and new eyes to see better, as men come out of a dampe, haue wondred and maruelled at the palpable and grosse darkenesse they were in before, and haue burst forth into these words, that they would not be in the same case they were before, no not for all the worlds goods: for if they had dyed in that case, they were sure they should haue beene damned. But I pray you, what case were they in before? were they not good honest men, and well accounted of, and honest liuers, and well taken whereso euer they came? surely they were so taken in the world; but now they think far otherwise of themselues, their eyes being opened, and their iudgements inlightned: for now they see what they saw not before: now they vnderstand that God condemneth many whome the world iustifieth. & thinketh this example should make ciuill and worldly men feare and suspect themselues, and know their owne misery before God. For those men were as good as they before their conuersion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottome of hel and drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heat let him heare: & he that hath eyes to see, let him see: for if men will thus sooth themselues for al this that they shall be saued, without feeling any change or worke of repentance, it will cost them ful deer

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in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be damned, that is, whosoeuer doth not feele in himselfe what is repentance, and finde in himselfe the qualities thereof, shall be condemned: for where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance: and where the qualities bee absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith, Except ye repent, ye shall all perish, it is all one as if hee had said, except you know the truth of repentance, except you can proue vnto your consciences the forgiuenes of your sinnes, except yee feele a change and alteration in the bottome of your harts for all your former lewd wayes and misdemeanours, you shal surely perish and be damned. But let vs a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the 7. chapter of the 2. Epistle to the Corinthians setteth downe seauen notable qualities and effects of repentance

The first of them hee nameth Care: For behold (saith hee) this things, that you haue been godly sorry, what care it hath wrought in you: this is an earnest study, & as it were, a taking thought to please God: for where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I say) to liue in the obedience of God: care to keepe a good conscience, care to reforme our households, care to

instruct our wiues, children, and seruants in the knowledge of God, care to pray with them morning and euening; and generally, care to performe all duties belonging to God: So that repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let no man thinke therefore, that although they welter in careleſneſſe of the fleſh, & ſlæp in ſecurity all the dayes of their life, yet their repentance is good inough: yea, & though they ſpend whole dayes, nights, moneths, and yæres in vanities, playes and paſtime, in idleneſſe, fond dilights, pleaſures & voluptuouſnes, in negligence of all duty, forgetfulnes of God, & contempt of all good things; yet for all this they repent for their ſins, and hope to be ſaued aſwel as any other. But alas, how can theſe things ſtand together, to repent for ſin, and to delight in ſinne, to hate ſin, & to loue ſin, to fly from ſin, and to follow after ſin? But theſe men I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a lyar: for hæ ſaith, A man hath neuer repented except he be carefull afterward to pleaſe God, they ſay they doe repent, and haue repented, although they liue neuer ſo wretchedly and careleſly. But when all licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whoremongers, beaſtly belly-gods, and careleſſe caitiffes, come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men come alſo with them, to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

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The next quality and effect of repentance is named Clearing of our selues, that is, discharging of our selues when sin doth accuse vs, and lay things to our charge: for when sin and Satan doe terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner, by and by he flyeth vnto God, and asketh forgiuenesse through Iesus Christ, so clearing himselfe, and making his apologie against Sinne and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court vpon suspition of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnesse, of that which is laid to his charge; so the conscience that is cited by Satan before the iustice and Iudgement-seat of God, cleareth it selfe by Repentance, and asketh forgiuenesse through Iesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sin, it cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God, and so haue peace with it selfe. For this is to be noted in the godly man, that when he hath committed any sin, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeles lead within him, and is all heauy, and cannot sleepe quietly till hee haue gotten into some corner, where hee may mourne and lament to the full, & confesse & lay open himselfe vnto God, and so cleare himselfe through Iesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnes that his sin is forgiuen. Wher-

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as contrariwise, the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sin, hee dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder foot: and by & by calleth for a paire of cards or Tables, or some merry companion to driue away time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head: & so indeed he increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called Indignation: that is, a mortal & deadly hatred against sinne, as when a man doth shudder and shake, and as it were grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sins: for this is alwayes in the penitent person, to loath and abhorre all sinne from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of others, and to hate it as the Diuel himselfe, which is the author of it: and to flye from it, as from the very cut-throat and hang-man of his soule, and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth and hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, wheresoever he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is Feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him; for the penitent person feareth alwaies

wayes, and being priuy to his owne infirmity and weaknesse (when God neuer so little withdraweth his grace and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with feare and trembling. Hée will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sin, or flatter himselfe in the mercy of God, and the things that hée hath already tasted of God, to yéeld to some little sinne, thinking he may doe that & be the child of God well enough, because some of Gods children haue fallen into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne and is afraid of the temptation which Satan trappeth in the way, and is afraid when the temptations of sin are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne: but rather he fighteth against sin when sin fighteth against him, & presenteth the feare of God before his eyes (as godly *Ioseph* in the assaults of *Potiphers* wife) to be as it were a tower of defence, & wel-spring of life to auoid the snares of death.

The fift thing is Desire, that is, hungring and thirsting after righteousnesse. For the penitent man is rauished with a desire of good things: he desireth to be euery day better then other, he desireth to leaue euery day some sinne, he desireth to pray, hée desireth new knowledge and new vnderstanding of heauenly things. He desireth to heare Sermons, and will straine himselfe to heare them. Hée desireth the company

pany of the godly, thinking himselfe in heauen when he is amongst them. He desireth the saluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires, are in the penitent man.

The first qualitie is Zeale, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue: and hatred of vice: so that the penitent person is zealous of euery good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honor should be impeached, or his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reproue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company, that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked among the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weather-cocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man I say is not of that stampe: but he is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might winne a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will refuse it: for he hath learned from Christs mouth

that

that it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Reuenge: that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin hee hath committed, that he will be reuenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if hee haue offended in gluttony, hee will reuenge himselfe by fasting two or three dayes after. If he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his lusts by haltering and bridling of them euer after. If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, hee will be reuenged on himselfe by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus: & this indeed is a speciall fruit of repentance, to reforme our selues in those things wherein we haue most offended. Now then we see (my deare brethren) what lyeth in the belly of Repentance, and which be her inwards: so that we must needs now come to the vnlacing and vnbowelling of Christs words: Except ye repent (saith he) ye shall all perish: that is, except ye haue this foresaid Care, you shal all be damned: except ye haue this Clearing of your selues, you shall be damned: except you haue this Indignation, you shall be damned: except you haue this Feare, you shall be damned: except you haue this Desire, you shall all be damned: except you haue this Zeale, you shall all be damned: except you haue this

Reuenge,

Reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speak of the bare name of Repentance, but of Repentance with her furniture and appurtenances: so that whosoeuer hath not Repentance with all her qualities & effects, or at least, some measure of them, hee hath no Repentance indeed, and therefore shall be damned: For except you repent, ye shall all perish. But mee thinketh that I heare some man say: here is nothing but damnation, damnation: you preach nothing but the Law, let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren, I protest vnto you, that I speake in loue whatsoeuer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all. If I could win but two of all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And vndoubtedly, if I knew any nearer way to bring you to God, then by preaching the Law to make you know your selues, surely, surely, I would vse it: or if I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, & mercy, would do you more good, you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, Mercy. But alas, I see that euery careleſſe and ignorant man presumeth vpon Gods mercy. I see that euery filthy liuer, and notorious blasphemer abuseth Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe without repentance, so that they would make

God's

Gods mercy a cloake for their sins: I for that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, & heare of it no more, but haue the Gospel preached: which indeed belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornnesse; but onely to the penitent sinner which forsaketh himselfe and groaneth and panteth vnder the burden of his sin. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and groane and pant vnder the burden of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the Law. But I pray you, will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and yet heare of mercy? Will you mocke, sweare, blaspheme & raile, and yet heare of mercy? Will you serue sin, hate vertue, and follow your own lusts, and yet heare of mercy? Would you haue plaisters before you haue wounds? Would you haue physicke before you be sicke? Would you be let blood before you haue need?

Would you not account him a foolish Physitian, that will minister physicke to a whole man? Would you not thinke him an vnskilful Chirurgion that will apply a gentle salue to an old festered sore, and not rather corzie it? Then know you my brethren, that because you are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong pur-

purgation, because you are full of old festered woundes, you must haue corraliue salues: for that is best for you, and the speediest way to recouer your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must haue a rough rider, and hard knotty timber must haue hard wedges, and hard strokes with a battle. We preach the law, to driue you to Christ, we preach iudgment to make you to seeke mercy, we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercy & forgiuenes before men see their sins, or know their misery by the preaching of the law, is to preach the Gospell vnprofitably: For he that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what misery is in himselfe, or what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his child should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commandeth, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy? & not rather seuerely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What master will commend his seruant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him? Euen so we may not disobey, and doe euill and looke to be flattered too, & not rather chidden. Let vs know then, that though God vse searing, lancing or corsiue, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the meane while he procureth our health by them. And let vs further vnderstand, that forasmuch

as much as there is no other meanes to draw vs to saluation, but by the clensing of all our vices, and the same clensing cannot be done but by violence, when wee be warned by the doctrine of the Law, so as our owne consciences accuse vs, although wee like well to be now and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs seeke to be spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and be made ashamed of them, and to haue our dishonesty discouered, and not desire to be pleased: For it were next way to make vs rot in our owne filthinesse, if wee should hold it in secret: and it would cost too deare the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heauenly Iudge thunder downe vpon vs.

Therefore, when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meet it is, and let him vnderstand that it is for his profit that hee is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himselfe else, that he is fore-closed, so shall he neuer receiue the doctrine to his profit and instruction: and let him be content to haue his soares rubbed and bewrayed, that he may be brought to that which is for his welfare. If any man please a sicke body, what shall become of him? shall hee giue him drinke euery minute of an

houre? shall giue him wine, whereas hée should giue him water? shall hée giue him sallets? it were the next way to poyson him. To be short, it is certian that a man doth alwayes séeke his owne death, when he would haue men to sooth him. But now, which is better? either that hée which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yéeld to all his desires, or that hée should bridle him, notwithstanding that hée chafe and gnash his téeth, because hée may not haue his will in his desires? You sée therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter and rayse vp men with the preaching of Mercy, before they haue béene cast downe with the sense of Gods iudgement. Cease therefore to open your mouth, to make hue and cry ouer the Countrey, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation Damnation; vnlesse you will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisedome, because hée preacheth and cryeth out, that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth, and iudgement to whom iudgment appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and be content to be ruled by the wisdome of God. But now let vs proceed to the third generall point, which is the time when we

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Now whilst hee calleth, now whilst he speaketh, now whilst he knocketh, let vs now therefore heare, let vs now therefore obey, let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue forefollowed so many dayes, which haue so long hardned our hearts, which haue let so many good things runne out and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although wee could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, this shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turne vnto my God, & forsake all my former wicked waies, and mine own imaginations: I wil now change the course of my life, and begin

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anew againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take counsell there how to doe, how to behaue my selfe in euery action. I will not onely reforme my selfe, but also my whole household, wife, children, and seruants according vnto the same. Thus my deare brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay: and bee not like to Epicures & slacke-graces, which say, Youth will bee youthfull, and youth will haue a course, and what should wee make it so holy when we are young? tush, there needs but a sigh an houre before death, let vs bee merry now, wee shall neuer bee younger, wee will repent when wee are old. As if (poore soules) they had Repentance in their sleeues, and at their commandement, and that they could repent when they list. No, no, these fellowes shall pay for their presumption: for God will giue them ouer to hardnesse of heart and impenitency, because they tooke so much vpon them, and made so long delayes, that in the meane season they might enioy the profits and pleasures of sinne. Therefore (good brethren) let vs not put it off from day to day, but let vs now seeke the Lord whilest hee may bee found, and call vpon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while time is, for time and tide tarrieth for no man: Let vs know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Sauior Christ wept ouer Ierusalem,

because

because they knew not the time of their visitation. Yee reproued the Iewes, because they could discerne the face of the skye, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, & wisedome cryeth out in the streets. Therefore now while we haue the light, let vs walke as children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deare Christians, let vs remember the fiue foolish virgins, which because they ouer-slowed the time, had heauen gates barred vp against them. Let vs also remember the fearefull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, and could not haue it. An hundred thousand times therefore better it is for vs, to leaue our sins now, to mourne for them now, and now to repent, then hereafter (alas) whē it shal be too late: better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes, and to make our hearts smart for them, then to be condemned for euer, and to cry in the bottome of hell: We haue wearied our

selues in the way of wickednes and destruction and wee haue gone through dangerous wayes, but we haue not knowne the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? or what profit hath the pompe of riches brought vs? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a Poste that passed by. Wee haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach: wee fooles thought their liues madnesse & their end with dishonor: but lo, they are counted amongst the children of God, & their portion is amongst the Saints: Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse then the fowles of the ayre: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the time of their comming: the husbandman taketh his time, the Mariner watcheth his tydes: therefore let vs also take the time, and turne to the Lord, whilst it is said to day; which grace God grant vs. Now let vs returne to the fourth point, concerning the causes which may moue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine speciall things.

First, the great mercy of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, as Rom. 9. The bountifulnesse of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, saith the Apostle: God doth continually follow vs with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules

soules & bodies, we haue no good thing which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue, of him; & to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercy towards our bodies, and euery mercy & benefit eyther towards soule or body calleth vs to repentance: he giueth vs meat, drinke, and cloathing, these call vs to repentance: hee kæpeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sun, the Moone, and the Starres call vs vnto repentance: the birds of the ayre, the fishes of the Sea, and the fruits of the earth, cry out vpon vs both loud and shrill, Repent, repent: All creatures moue vs vnto repentance. Our Creation calleth vs, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moueth vs to repentance: What could God doe more for his Vineyard that hee hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of God moue vs vnto Repentance: for all the thunder-bolts, plagues, and punishments, which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning peeces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the dead sleep of sin, and to pricke vs to repentance. As in 1 Cor. 10. when the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of God against the olde Israelites for diuers sins, he concludeth:

Now all these things came vnto them for examples, and were written to admonish vs, vpon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are as so many admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw vs to repentance. All the iudgements wee reade of, doe see, and heare of euery day, knocke with maine strokes, beate downe right vpon our consciences to repentance. The vgly monsters, strange births, and fiery constellations, vnknowne comets, sodaine deaths, maruellous droughts, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forraine wonders, strange apparitions, threatning of heauen aboue with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feet, and our houses ouer our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames and Cable ropes to draw vs to the Lord by repentance?

Thirdly, the word of God helpeth vs to repentance; for as God in the old time sent his Prophets both early and late to call the rebellions Iewes to repentance; so he sendeth abroad the Preachers and messengers in these dayes to sound vp the Trumpet of his Word, and to ring the sweet Bells of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth

their

their voyce? But surely, this is the last remedy that God hath appointed: and if this will not moue vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogether vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes we haue committed, ought to be so many spurres in our sides to pricke vs to repentance. It is sufficient (saith S. Peter) that we haue spent the time of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse, gluttony, drinkings, and all abhominable idolatries. Now therefore it is time to repent. Oh that men would looke backe to themselues, as they were forty, thirty, twenty, or ten yeares agoe! Oh that they would call to minde their open and secret sinnes, & me thinketh it should make their hearts bleed within their bellies to thinke vpon them: Oh that they would consider how much time they haue misspent, and how many good things, they haue neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fiftly, the shortnesse of our life calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixty yeares and ten, and if they liue to eighty yeares, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and wee flye away, saith the Prophet Dauid: we haue spent our yeares as a thought, therefore he adeth, Teach vs to number our dayes, that wee may

apply

apply our hearts to wiſedome. Our life, for the ſhortneſſe and inconſtancy of it, in the Scriptures, is compared to graſſe, to a vapour, to ſmoake, to a weauers ſhuttle, which glideth away ſwiftly. Euen ſo the dayes of men paſſe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of ſhort continuance (ſaith Iob) and full of trouble. Experience teacheth vs, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away we muſt all, here is no abiding place for vs: how ſoone we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sixtly, the ſmall number of thoſe which ſhall be ſaued, ought to thruſt vs forward to repentance. Striue to enter in at the narrow gate: for many (I ſay vnto you) will ſeeke to enter in, and ſhall not be able, ſaith Chriſt, Luk. 13.24. And in another place he ſaith, The gate is ſtrait, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and few there be that find it. If men would conſider of this, it would make them looke better about them, and try with themſelues whether they be of that ſmall number or no.

Seuenthly, Death threatens vs, which is very terrible to the fleſh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is ſouſed and ſoked in the pleaſures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no perſon, it weigheth no friendſhip, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, vgly, and cruell, and killeth downe-right where

where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of iudgement and second appearing of the Son of man. He will come as a theefe in the night, in the which the heauens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elements shall melt with heat, and the earth with the workes that are therein shall be burnt vp. Seeing therefore that all these things must be dissolued, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conuersation, and godlinesse? saith S. Peter 2.3. The Lord Iesus shall shew himselfe from heauen with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Iesus Christ saith the Apostle, 2 Thes. 1. I saw (saith Iohn Rev. 20.) a great white throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the heauen, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great and small, stand before God, and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the booke of life, and the dead were iudged of those things which were written in the bookes, according to their workes; and the sea gaue vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuered vp their dead which were in them; and they were iudged euery man according to his workes.

In these places wee see both the suddennesse,

the

the fearfulneſſe and glory of Chriſts comming.

For he ſhall not come poorely and contemptuouſly, as in the firſt viſitation, but he ſhall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly, to the great terror of his enemies, when a conſuming fire ſhall goe before him, and ten thouſand thouſands of Angels waite vpon him; at what time the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe Captaines, and the mighty men, & euery bond-man, and euery free-man ſhall hide themſelues in dens, and among the rockes of mountaines, and ſay to the rockes and mountaines, fall on vs, & hide vs from the preſence of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can ſtand? Rev. 6 Therefore let vs repent.

The laſt thing is Hell torments, then the which nothing is more intollerable. Therefore ſaith Chriſt, Matth. 9. If thine hand cauſe thee to offend, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter into life maymed, then hauing two hands, to goe into hell, into the fire that neuer ſhall be quenched, where the worme dyeth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture ſpeaketh terribly to our ſenſes concerning the eſtate of the damned perſons, calling it, Hell-fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone for euer. In the 30 Chapter of the

the Prophesie of Esay, it is called Topher, and is euen prepared of old, it is euen prepared for the King, he hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a riuer of brimstone, doth kindle it. These speaches are terrible in themselues, and very maruellously amaze vs. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men; nay of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to vtter them, as some (one day) shall feele them, much lesse were you able to conceiue them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can bee deuised by the wit of man, were executed vpon some one, yet were it nothing to this. Wee poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a tholicke, or a cruell ague: But if all tholickes, agues, and all other strange diseases, could possibly light vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endlesse, easelesse and remedilesse. The dayes of their hellish torments shall neuer weare out, nor their yeeres come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope they haue: when as many yeeres be expired as there bee men in the world, and starres in the heauens: when as many thousand yeeres are ended, as there bee stones and sands by the Sea-shore, yet still there be ten hundred thousand times so many more to come. Those that will

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not now bee moued in hearing, shall then bee crushed in peeces in feeling. All drunkards, swearers, whore-mongers, vsurers, extortioners, lyars, mockers, contemners, secure persons, iolly-fellowes, roysting ruffians, lusty-bloods, the braue lads of this world, and all other vnbeleeuers, shall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the bar of Gods tribunall seate, where the maiesty of God shall stand aboue them with a naked sword of vengeance, and a Scepter of Iustice; the Diuell, that old Sathan, shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their owne consciences on the other side to condemne them; and the gasping gulfe of hell vnderneath them, ready to swallow them vp for euermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe and damnation proceed against them. Goe ye cursed into hell fire. &c. There they shall drinke (as iust recompence of their iniquity) the bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath & indignation in the kingdome of darkenesse, and in the fearefull presence of Sathan, & all the cursed enemies of Gods grace: where the dolefull drumme of Gods anger shall euer sound through their eares, where shall euer bee weeping and gnashing of teeth; where shall bee confusion, woe, and endlesse lamentation: their gripes shall bee so great, their groanes so deepe, and their garboiles so intollerable, that they

they shall grin like a dog in their infernall conuulsions, and with howling and yelling cry out Wo and alas that euer I was borne: O that I had neuer bẽn borne, or that my mother had borne mẽ a toad: so, then my condition should haue bẽn better then it is; cursed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day I sucked my mothers paps: cursed I was alwaies, cursed I am, and cursed I shall be euermore: Wo, wo, how great is my torment? Whose hart doth not melt? Whose eares do not glow? Whose haires do not stand vpon his head to heare these things? Therefore (deare brethren) let vs repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements scare vs: If his iudgements cannot scare vs, let his word moue vs: If his word cannot moue vs, let our sins amaze vs, if our sins cannot amaze vs, let the shortnes of our life damp vs: If the shortnesse of our life cannot dampe vs, let the small number of those that shall bee saued affray vs: if that cannot affray vs, let death terrifie vs: If death cannot terrifie vs, let the day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot shake vs, let hell torments shudder vs & rend vs in peeces. For verily (my brethren) if none of all these can preuaile, if wee will not for all this repent, but bee still obstinate, then wee shall all perish, and bee damned, according

to Christs words. Now let us proceed to speake of those things which hinder from repentance: which indeed, although they bee in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seuen speciall lets and hinderances vnto repentance.

The first is vnbeliefe: that is, when men will not beleeue such things which are spoken and proued vnto them out of the word of God: that is it that vomiteth vp all good things, and poysoneth the very intrayles of a man, and beareth all good graces from vs, as appeareth, Matth. 13. 58. He did not many great workes there for their vnbeliefes sake: and in the fourth Chapter to the Hebrews it is said: vnto them was the Gospell preached, as also vnto vs: but the word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixt with Faith in those that heard it. So that heere wee may see, although wee heare neuer so much, yet if wee bring not faith with vs, wee shall neuer profit vnto repentance: For vnbeliefe taketh vp our hearts for Sathan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of saluation, and doth so harden men in the wayes of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and cannot bee touched one whit, either with the iudgements or mercy of God, but count the one as blasts of winde, and make the other a couert for their filthinesse. Now shall note some men, who when they haue

haue heard their sinnes straightly ripped vp by the Word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of vnbeliefe: If this be as he saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so: I trust I shall doe well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God, and doe no body no harme: Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profits for their saying? What? doe they thinke none shall be saued, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare Sermons? God forbid, but those which doe not goe to heare Sermons, should be saued as well as they: why, may not one serue God as well at home in his house, hauing good Bookes and good Prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare sermons and seruice? Alas: these men stand too much in their owne light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For doe they thinke to be saued by any other meanes then GOD hath appointed? or when GOD hath auouched any thing in his word, will they except against it, and so make God a lyar? When God hath once set downe a thing, & proued it to their faces, will they yet reply, whē God hath told vs, that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary meanes of our saluation, shall we hope to be saued, though we contemne it, and neuer (or very seldome) heare

it? Is not this plaine infidelity and vnbeliefe, that when God saith one thing wee will say another: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so? Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The second let is, the presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharpely reproued for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talke couertly, saying, God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iustice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophecy doth sharply reproue: The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but hee is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked, But because I haue spoken before of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it ouer, willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto Repentance.

The third hinderance is, the example of the multitude; for that doth hearten and imbolden men vnto sinne: As when many Birds flicker and flocke together, they fall vpon the baite without any feare; but one or two alone will be afraid: euen so the examples of many sinne-companions doe imbolden men to run through

the ſnares of Sathan, without any miſtruſt. Therefore it is ſaid in Exod. 23. Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing which hindereth a great number from God: for they neuer look vp vnto God, or to his word, but ſtare vpon the common doings of moſt men, and examples of the world: thinking if they doe as the moſt men doe, and as their Fore-fathers haue done before them, they are cocke ſure, and on an euen ground. And thereupon ariſeth their diuelliſh Prouerbe; Doe as the moſt men doe, and the feweſt will ſpeake ill of you. But they haue forgotten Saint Pauls rule, Rom. 21. Faſhion not your ſelues like vnto this World. Theſe fellowes that ſtand vpon multitudes, will reaſon thus: We ſee none of the great ones of the World, none of the Noble, none of the Rich, none of the wiſe and prudent receiue this doctrine, but onely a few ſhake-ragges, and beggarly Raſcals; and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may creepe into our heads, and how ſlily Sathan may trumpe in our way, and blind-fold vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by noting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take heede of thoſe pit-falles which Sathan layeth in our way, and not bee carried away with thoſe thoughts

and reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand, that they shall winne the game, and that the gole goeth on their side, & there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, & great triumphing among them before any stroke be giuen, and that because wee are but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a maner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the diuell doth cast a mist before their eyes, and closely leads them away from repentance. Therefore deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of the Lord, and not be caried away, or bowed quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude, but let vs know it to be one speciall engine of Sathan, whereby he driueth vs from repentance,

The fourth let vnto repentance is, long custome of sin: for that taketh away all sense and feeling of sinne, and maketh it as it were another Nature vnto vs, so that wee may aswell alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus fouldred vnto vs through long custome. Therefore it is said, Ier. 13.23. Can the black Moore change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also doe good that are accustomed to doe euill. There the Prophet affirmeth that it is as hard to cure an old disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sinne that hath beene hatched and brought vp with vs, as

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to wash a Black-Moore white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot bee without destroying of nature. And surely, try it who will, hee shall finde as hard a matter to leaue an old custome, whether it bee of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of euill company, or any other sinne, as to wash an Æthiopian. Therefore it is written, Prouer. 27. Though thou shouldest bray a foole in a morter, among Wheate brayed with a Pestell, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him. So that as long as wee are in custome with sinne, the doore of repentance is barred against vs.

The fift hinderance is, long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are hardened in sinne, and driuen off from repentance: euen as an olde thiefe that hath stollen a long time, and escaped both prison and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickednes, thinking hee shall so alwaies escape: So many filthy and loose liuers goe forward in their abhomination, without repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifold iudgement and signe of his wrath upon them, therefore they shall be acquitted for altogether. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundering vpon one, and lightening vpon another,

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and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraid. Hereupon it is said in 2 Pet. 3. 2. 4. This first vnderstand, that there shall come in the last dayes, mockers, which will walke after their lusts, and say: Where is the promise of his comming? For since the Fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the Creation. But let these men well know, that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length he will shew, that although hee waited for their repentance, yet hee forgot not their misdeedes, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape to increase the terrour of his wrath.

The first hinderance is, the beholding of other mens ends. For when some men that haue liued a wicked and an vngracious life, and haue beene notorious sinners, euen to the worldward, so that euery man could point at them: yet if vpon their death bed they can say a few good words, and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly, it is maruellous to heare how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and iustifie them saying: Hee made a very good end as any man could make, hee died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before hee dyed. Hereupon another wicked and monstrous

varlet is incouraged to sinne, For thinketh he, such a man liueth as loosely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so too? But alas these mens eyes are bleared; for to die quietly is not to dye godly: to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull: to say a few prayers from the teeth outward, is not to dye in the faith of Christ: for many doe all these, and yet die miserably.

The last let is, hope of long life: for while men feede and besot themselues in this hope, they are drunken in sinne, and deferre the day of repentance, as the rich man in the 12. of Luk. dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought of God, and the other life, and of Christs comming, and of all good things, and said within himselfe: Soule, thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeeres, liue at ease, eate, drinke, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of this world, choake vp repentance, and quite smother it, by doating themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deere brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and vnfained repentance, but that you may ouerslide them all: lest haply you being found without Repentance, and taken tardy in your sinnes,

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should all perish, and be damned, according to Christs sentence. Wherefore in conclusion let vs with godly Ezechiah be afraid of Gods threatnings, sorrow afore-hand, stand in awe of God, examine our consciences, mourne for our sins, & lament inwardly, that when the wicked who haue swimmed in pleasure here below, shall enter into their eternall paines, wee may then, I say, there haue euerlasting peace and rest: that when Iesus Christ shall appeare from heauen with all his Angels, wee may haue crownes of glory, and reigne with our God and our Sauiour his Sonne, and all his Saints & Angels, in the midst of all ioy, in the heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring vs all, which hath so dearely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous. To whom, with the Father, and the holy Ghost, be all honour, Glory, Praise, Power, and Dominion, now and for euermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.